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17

A LETTER

FROM

THE KING

TO HIS PEOPLE,

FROM THE TWELFTH LONDON EDITION.

John Wilson Croker

LONDON:

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NESS THE DUKE OF YORK.

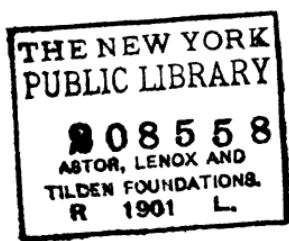
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CARLTON PALACE, DEC. 1, 1820.

To all our loving Subjects and Countrymen, however exalted in rank or humble in station, the King sends alike his most affectionate greeting.

THE liberty of the press does not permit to your King, the possibility of remaining ignorant of passing events, or unaffected by the public agitation : at one and the same time it conveys to me sentiments of satisfaction or grounds of complaint ; the promised support of the constitutional, and the threat of the disaffected. My own conduct, the measures of my executive, the state of my kingdom, and the condition of my subjects, are placed before me in as many various, confused, and contradictory positions, as the greater or lesser degree of information, the rivalship of party, the animosity of prejudice, or the insidiousness of faction, alternately suggest. In this chaos of contrariety, to me the first great difficulty is, to discover the truth ; the next, so to manage the discovery, as to produce from it some sound and dispassionate course of action.

This liberty of the press, in itself a great abstract good, capable alike of being converted into a bane or antidote, and, by discreet and conscientious management, capable also of promoting and effecting immortal benefits to mankind, or inflicting upon them irremediable ills, keeps up at least a constant communication between us, depriving the courtier of the power of concealing from his Sovereign public opinion, and placing him within the effect of inquiry. With such a constant possibility of explanation, a Monarch may be misguided, but cannot be uninformed ; he may adopt

decisive rules of government, but cannot remain ignorant of their effects.

Although it is presumed that I become acquainted with political occurrences and opinions, solely through the channel of my official advisers, and can only constitutionally address my people through the regular organ of parliament, or of my council; yet at this momentous crisis, pregnant with evil to our common country, and to me so interesting as a man and a husband, but above all, as the inheritor of my Royal Father's crown, the form and mode of this communication may stand shielded and excused, in the generally anomalous character of the circumstances to which I shall hereafter advert: nor, on so singular an occasion, do I think it derogatory to the dignity of my exalted station, to attempt the dispersion of a mist, in which too many of my subjects have wandered, led on by a generous delusion.

I will not accuse, I do not accuse, of disaffection either to my person or government, *all* who are advocates for the cause of the Queen; for in that case, I perceive plainly a variety of motives in activity; in the combination of those motives, differing widely from each other, the immediate danger appears to consist: but it is also, from their discordance, that future tranquillity may be expected. I am persuaded that could my subjects, upon reflection, be brought to consider the probability of my being an injured and calumniated Prince, they would abstain from further insult to the crown inherited from **GEORGE THE THIRD**. I am also persuaded that public opinion, although forced into extremes by the goadings of a portion of the daily press, alike unrestrained by truth, and as devoid of principle, as lost to the common civilities of society, would soon right itself; when a plain and simple narrative (such as any man of reasonable mind might comprehend) should supersede the distorted and tortured facts which have lately pre-occupied too great a part of the nation.

So many years have elapsed since the period of my un-

happy marriage, that it may not be inexpedient (indeed it appears absolutely necessary, in order to develop certain springs of action) to recall the times and circumstances in which, and by which, this event was produced.

The French Revolution was at its height ; the Royal Family of France had been murdered ; Holland had imbibed the revolutionary mania, and the Stadtholder had fled to this protecting country ; at home a traitorous spirit was actively at work ; trials for high treason had served only to increase the insolence of faction, and foster rebellion ; Ireland was on the verge of open revolt ; and every political appearance threatened an attempt upon the constitution of these realms ; a dreadful war was raging : yet, amidst and in the face of all these evils, it was the wish of my Royal Father to strengthen the succession to the throne of these realms ; and the more especially, as my royal brother of York had been married four years, without the expectation of a family. No moment could be less auspicious than the one chosen. My own inclination was averse to a marriage of expediency ; nor need I tell my subjects under what disadvantages a Prince of the Royal Family labours, and more especially the heir apparent born in the Kingdom, in a chance for matrimonial happiness ; and for myself, confined by the laws of my country within the limits of the realm, I could never hope to lead my countrymen to the field of battle in her just wars, or extend my sphere of useful acquirement, by foreign travels, and the personal examination of the customs, manners, and government of other countries. Of the character of their princes and courtiers, I could only learn by intermediate report.

Debarred thus from active employment, and destined to pass my time in royal idleness ; surrounded with pleasures at every step, and captivated with beauty ; it would not be the most difficult enigma to solve, how I became thoughtlessly extravagant. Notwithstanding I had experienced the generosity of my countrymen, when twenty-four years of

age; yet in nine years after, my debts became again the object of serious consideration. In the midst of a war then raging, expensive beyond all former precedent, and with no glimpse of termination; when monarchy throughout Europe was threatened with annihilation; some powerful and unanswerable motive, or some important and ostensible good, could alone justify the minister of the day, in applying to Parliament for the payment of the debts of an extravagant Prince, for such I acknowledge myself to have been.

The justification of the measure was found to be in *my marriage*.

The nation most generously paid my debts, made provision for such marriage, and I became an *expedient* party to the contract. For me there was no escape; the interest of my creditors demanded such sacrifice; a sacrifice of which my heart could only appreciate the extent.

But although the match was forced, and I was left (unlike my subjects) to no voluntary choice, I had still a right to expect in a Princess of exalted ancestry, and one previously allied to me by relationship, a female of chaste person and uncontaminated taste.

But the morning which dawned on the consummation of this marriage, witnessed its virtual dissolution.

Our daughter, the lamented Princess Charlotte, the child of a fond and admiring nation, was born precisely at the moment prescribed by nature.

Of the causes which led to this immediate separation, which however was for a time most carefully concealed, and concealed, I trust, from no ungenerous feeling on my part, it does not belong to me to detail the explanation. But who beside ourselves was interested in it? Surely the family of the illustrious female in question! Did they complain? Did they remonstrate? Did they demand a restitution of conjugal rights between us? Did they interfere to conciliate, to palliate, to explain? Never. By their silence

then was I justified in requiring at a proper moment, a more openly avowed separation. *The first wrong was done to me.*

The situation in which my Royal Father was placed towards us both, was one of peculiar delicacy, and requires your particular attention. Independently of his own good and well-intentioned motives, he could not but feel that I had sacrificed my happiness to obedience to his will, and to those urgent and pressing political influences which directed that will. To him, therefore, it must have been painful to find, that all chance of connubial connexion was destroyed as soon as formed ; it must also have been painful to him to know, that in commanding my marriage, he had (however unintentionally) clogged my high station with a source of constant anxiety and unceasing misrepresentation. Again : as towards the then Princess of Wales, his late Majesty, my revered Father and King, could not but have felt, that a marriage so brought about at his urgent desire, and enforced upon one positive condition, called forth from him more especially every increased attention towards the illustrious female whom he had introduced into the country ; nor could this fatherly attention be otherwise than the more marked and decisive, on account of the relationship of that illustrious female in question to the then Queen of these realms. His most sacred Majesty was thus doubly and peculiarly bound to the protection of the interests of this illustrious female, as well as to a gentlemanly forbearance towards a son, through his influence so unexpectedly, so unusually, and I may add so unhappily circumstanced. This line of nice distinction and difficult conduct, so honourably and so nobly adhered to by his late Majesty, led to the erroneous supposition, that my honoured and royal parent and myself were at variance upon this important occasion : but such was not in the slightest degree the fact ; the subject was, as it were, interdicted mutually from our conferences and meetings, and I always honoured my royal pa-

rent the more highly for the motives which influenced and marked out the line of conduct he felt himself peculiarly called upon to adopt. His aim was, to soften by every means of alleviation in his power the situation of the Princess; but, at the same time, he was left without cause of accusation against his son's early determination.

Having rested the propriety of my conduct upon the silence of the relatives of the Princess, on an occasion when silence on their part could only have been imposed by a knowledge of a means of justification; and having discovered the principle which generosity and hospitality dictated to my late Father and King in his conduct towards the Princess, I now refer to a letter, dated Windsor Castle, April 30, 1796; which letter has been termed insolently, unjustifiably, and almost traitorously, a letter of license.

"It was always competent for the Princess of Wales to demand from me, if she felt herself so justified, the restitution of her conjugal rights." That a female of her lofty daring should not have taken such a step, admits a very strong argument in favour of the retiring husband; at all events, it allows of the inference, that there was a domestic and personal cause for separation, to which the parties mutually consented.

This letter of the 30th of April above alluded to may be considered as containing the terms of our separation. On this letter, which evidently refers to former conferences and previous communications, and was written to the Princess at her own request, I have but one observation to make, namely,—“That pending the arrangement for an open and avowed separation, the then Princess of Wales, through the medium of Lady Cholmondeley, required that the separation should be final and conclusive, as to any future particular intercourse, and not to be renewed at any period, even though our child the Princess Charlotte should die.” To this proposition I assented; by this proposition I have abided, and ever will abide. It is an extra proposition emanating from the Queen; it contains her own terms.

From the moment of this open and avowed separation, rendered perpetual by the proposition of her Royal Highness; I can call herself and the kingdom to witness, whether any thing has been withheld from the personal accommodation of the Princess of Wales? Whether a suitable establishment, regulated by herself, was not provided for her comfort? Whether I ever interfered with her arrangements, her society, or her social convenience; in short, I boldly challenge my people to the proof, whether I had ever been guilty of any step, directly or indirectly, to break in upon that arrangement of tranquillity and comfortable society, which was the basis of our mutual separation.

This separation between the Princess and myself, partook not in its origin, of the smallest political mixture; it was purely an unhappy but unavoidable domestic occurrence, of which the good manners of both parties might have softened the effect; and in which, strict propriety of conduct, such as befitted the second lady in the land, might have commanded my respect; though an insurmountable obstacle was opposed to any further feeling. During this separation, the Princess of Wales possessed the most uncontrolled choice and command of her own household; she was mistress of her own conduct; was still the wife of the heir apparent to the throne, and mother of the heiress presumptive. The Princess must have been aware of the superior legal responsibility attached to the high and important rank she held in the empire; and the peculiarity of her situation demanded a greater degree of discretion; painful and singular as was that situation, it was one in which the Princess might have shone with additional splendour, had she maintained a dignified and elegant association.

I am charged by the giddy press and the partizans of the Queen, with having upon all occasions, besieged her with spies and suborned traducers.

At the period of this separation in 1796, the then Princess of Wales surrounded herself, not with any friends of mine,

but with an establishment of her own choice. But suppose, for argument sake, this false assertion to be true ; how completely useless would have been the office of those spies and tale-bearers, had the conduct of her Royal Highness given no grounds for their occupation ! In such a case, the more closely her Royal Highness had been watched, the more spotless, chaste and unquestionable would her conduct have appeared. Ought it, under any circumstances, even of presumed aggravation, to have been otherwise ?

I approach now the period of the first investigation of 1806, which took place *ten years* after the separation ; and which carried back its research four years from the date of its report. The very circumstance, that it became necessary to trace *through several years* the conduct of her Royal Highness, allows me fairly to assert that which was the fact ; namely, " that it was not until after tale upon tale had been in wide circulation for a long period ; nor until those reports assumed the threatening character of high treason, that I determined to advise with a retired Lord Chancellor on the measures necessary to be adopted." Had I been actuated by the foul spirit attributed to me, I had at that moment an opportunity of gratifying such revenge, by demanding a public trial instead of a private investigation. The base political purposes to which the privacy of that proceeding was subsequently applied, might almost tempt me to regret that I had not done so ; yet I do not regret it, since the motive was (even at the very moment of an inquiry becoming legally expedient) to shield the object of it as much as possible from publicity, I might almost say, to accommodate her acquittal. Upon this occasion, the reputation and character of those eminent noblemen, Lords Erskine, Spencer, Grenville, and Ellenborough, must first be destroyed, before I can be charged with provoking an unnecessary inquiry into the existence of circumstances which had long been circulating, through every rank of society, which were at the time generally believed to be true,

or enveloped in a mystery far removed from that absence of all doubtful and suspicious appearances, which should characterize the conduct of a Princess of Wales. On this occasion, the same honourable feelings which had invariably guided the conduct of my Royal Father and King, inclined him still to shield and protect her Royal Highness, and to place the least culpable interpretation upon the circumstances of that mysterious case. It was the same generous feeling which induced my Royal Father to adopt, as a previous step, my proposal of a private and confidential inquiry, in a matter, where less considerate conduct might, at once, have transferred the cause of offence to a public tribunal. Throughout the whole of this affair, her Royal Highness was treated with a delicacy suitable to the peculiarity of her situation, to which every, and the most generous consideration was paid. Her Royal Highness was aware of it, and *at the moment* felt herself so treated.

Did I, upon this occasion, dissent from the line of conduct recommended to be pursued? No. Did I interfere with the duties of the noble lords commissioners upon the occasion? No. Did I, as a husband, cease to perform the terms of separation even after the imperious necessity which had devolved upon me as Prince of Wales, of requiring indemnity for the succession to the throne? No. I assert, that in the conflicting duties imposed upon me as a husband, and as Prince of Wales, that when the admonition of my royal parent was deemed sufficient for the occasion, I acquiesced. Nor, on a subsequent occasion, did I hesitate to pay the debts of the illustrious person in question, in her character of my wife. Nay more, I carried still further the spirit of conciliation, and proof of my acquiescence in the result of such investigation, by the subsequent advance to honour and distinction of one of the parties implicated criminally in the charge against the then Princess of Wales. I am therefore, on that occasion, the avowed approver of the result of the inquiry; and stand convicted, either of be-

ing regardless of my own honour, or of being satisfied that the accusation was over-strained.

Before I dismiss this part of my letter, I would direct the attention of my subjects and countrymen to the rigour of the law, applicable to the wife of the heir apparent to the throne. An error which, in any female of less distinguished rank, is merely a civil injury, in the wife of the Prince of Wales *is a crime against the nation*. The mere act of offence is in both cases alike ; but in the one may be attended with the last penalty, that of death. If therefore, in any proceedings connected with the case of a prince of Wales, there appears a greater measure of legal harshness, to which our moral feelings are opposed, it should be remembered, that the anomaly is created by the statutes of the realm. I made not the law for myself.

When the Princess of Wales had received the admonitory letter of 1806, no complaint at the time was made by her, either against its justice, or the mode in which the inquiry had been conducted. It was reserved to revive the painful subject seven years after its occurrence ; and to attack the proceedings, as well as the intermediate restraint which had been imposed on the intercourse of the Princess with our daughter ; in a letter dated early in 1813, addressed to me as Regent of these United Kingdoms. That letter, as containing a matter of complaint deserving of inquiry, was submitted, without regard to the personally offensive remarks contained in it, to several dignitaries of the church and of the law. Upon this second report, the restriction alluded to was still continued, and the aspersions cast upon the testimony of certain witnesses connected with the inquiry of 1806, were pronounced to be *wholly groundless*, and *without the slightest support of Proof*.

It is important for me to draw your attention to the circumstance, that the two reports were drawn up by noblemen of differing political sentiments, accustomed to constant parliamentary opposition ; if therefore from such an

ordeal, the proceedings of 1806 have escaped censure, and consequently became stamped with a character of fair and impartial justice, I have a right to demand, and do demand, a full and complete acquittal from all those false and unprincely motives, by which my conduct has been stigmatised; I plead guilty only of one motive, "That of preserving to my daughter her rights, and protecting the purity of succession to the throne of my ancestors."

Had the result of this second report, produced by a set of political reasoners wholly opposed to the first commissioners, varied from the report of such commissioners; had it brought home to the witnesses upon the former occasion, any charge of perjury, or have elicited any trace of unworthy motive, or corruptly contrived evidence; it would have been my unavoidable duty as Regent, and the office most pleasing to me as a husband and a man, to have revived that inquiry, and have punished the guilty participators in it; and besides, it was at all times open to the Princess *to bring her accusers before the tribunals of her country*. Unless therefore every principle of civilized conduct has been violated by me, and I alone have proceeded upon impulses different from all mankind, surely, on my own account, I must have rejoiced at any elucidation which had sprung up, had it been only for the mere selfish purpose of *wiping from myself* the mortification of such recorded aspersions. Was it to be supposed, that I should tamely cover myself with the mantle of my own shame, could I have had it in my power to destroy every thread of the garment? I should have deserved the scorn of the age, and ill merited the allegiance of my father's subjects, could I have hesitated one moment in following the minutest ray which might detect the mystery of 1806, and completely clear her Royal Highness from those charges.

But from the date of this letter in 1813, the whole transaction, which had hitherto been treated as a domestic difference, assumed on the part of the Princess of Wales a poli-

tical aspect. To this point I shall subsequently refer; for the present, therefore, I will pass on to the period of her departure to visit the continent.

Upon this occasion, her Royal Highness addressed her intentions to me, through the medium of the Earl of Liverpool, in a Letter dated the 25th July, 1814, in which her Royal Highness stated as her first and her most urgent motive for wishing to retire to the continent, "The restoration of tranquillity to my mind." Her Royal Highness then goes on to complain of the indignities and mortification to which she had been exposed, by being withheld from receiving her nearest relations, and the most intimate friends of the late Duke of Brunswick, her father; and alludes to the rupture of the proposed alliance between our daughter, the Princess Charlotte, and the Prince of Orange. Her Royal Highness also pointing out her route, states that she intends to return to Brunswick her native country, and with a degree of uncertainty adds, she *may* afterwards travel into Italy and Greece, and proposes certain arrangements as to the disposition of her private property. To all these points I subjoin the reply, as transmitted through my prime minister, with this one observation, that Lord Liverpool does not *silently* pass over the circumstance of her Royal Highness possessing apartments in a royal palace, (to which her Royal Highness makes no allusion in her letter,) but absolutely states, that such apartments will still be retained for the use of her Royal Highness; thus, if any conscious doubts had existed in the mind of the Princess, and this omission was intended to draw from me any expression as to the length of her stay on the continent, or whether I considered that the departure of the Princess was intended to be permanent, such doubts are clearly removed by the specific allusion of Lord Liverpool to those particular apartments in a royal palace.

Her Royal Highness then leaves England by her own voluntary act, at her own express desire, retaining by the avowed will of the Prince (acting on behalf of the King) a

residence, to which, at any time, she might return. There is also a second point in this letter of the Princess, on which I would make one short observation. Her Royal Highness, referring to the mode of disposal of part of her property, uses this expression: "The Princess of Wales hopes the Prince Regent will grant this favour, *the last that she will solicit.*" I ask then—Is this the language of a wife receiving injuries from a husband, or is it not characteristic of language from a wife to a husband, who, though separated from that husband, had ever been accustomed to receive from him every favour and benefit which could with honour be granted? I subjoin the reply alluded to, as it corrects the political points contained in the letter of the Princess.

Letter of Lord Liverpool to the Princess of Wales, dated the 28th of July, 1814.

"Lord Liverpool has had the honour to receive the letter of her Royal Highness. Having communicated it to the Prince Regent, he has ordered him to inform her Royal Highness that he can have no objection to the intentions of her Royal Highness to effect the design which she announces to the Prince Regent, of returning to her native country, to visit her brother the Duke of Brunswick, assuring her, that the Prince Regent will never throw any obstacle in the way of her present or future intentions as to the place where she may wish to reside.

"The Prince Regent leaves her Royal Highness at liberty to exercise her own discretion as to her abode in this country or on the continent, as it may be convenient to her.

"Lord Liverpool is also commanded, on the part of the Prince Regent, to inform her Royal Highness, that he will not throw any obstacles in the way of the arrangements of her Royal Highness, whatever they may be, respecting the house at Blackheath, which belonged to the late Duchess of Brunswick, or the rest of the private property of her Royal Highness. But that, for reasons rather too long to explain, the Prince Regent will not permit the Princess Charlotte to be a ranger of Greenwich Park,

or to occupy any of the houses at Blackheath, which her Royal Highness has hitherto occupied.

“Lord Liverpool has also been enjoined, on the part of the Prince Regent, before he closes the letter which he has the honour to send to her Royal Highness, to tell her, in relation to the two articles which her Royal Highness has put in her letter concerning the rupture of the marriage of the Princess Charlotte with the hereditary Prince of Orange, as well as to the reason for which the allied sovereigns did not, previously to their departure from England, pay their visit to her Royal Highness; that, as to the first article, Lord Liverpool is commanded by the Prince Regent to inform her Royal Highness, that the Prince Regent is not persuaded that the private considerations of the circumstances in which the Princess is placed, can have been an obstacle to the marriage of the Princess Charlotte. As to the second article, Lord Liverpool is also enjoined, on the part of the Prince Regent, to signify to her Royal Highness, that the Prince Regent never opposed himself to the allied sovereigns making a visit to her Royal Highness during their stay in London.

“Lord Liverpool has the honour to be with all esteem and the highest consideration.

“P. S. The Prince Regent can make no difficulties on the subject of the directions which the Princess has the intention of giving as to the House of Blackheath; neither will the Prince Regent oppose her Royal Highness’s retaining the apartments in the Palace of Kensington, in the same manner as she possessed them while in London, for the convenience of herself and suite.”

At the period then of the departure of her Royal Highness from the kingdom, the very last communication between us was on my part, that of assuring her, that the residence, more particularly occupied by her as a state residence, should be considered as remaining still at her disposal; thus placing a seal of oblivion on the past, and according every thing but personal communication.

Her Royal Highness was enabled to quit England as became her rank, with a suite of her own choice, with zealous friends among that suite, and with every facility afforded her of ren-

dering her stay on the continent comfortable and convenient, Her public reception at foreign courts naturally depended on, and was regulated by established etiquette.

I have thus brought down the material circumstances of my unhappy marriage, to the period of the departure of her Royal Highness for the continent; the transactions in themselves, however unfortunate, are plain and simple, easily understood, and as capable of explanation, when viewed without any selfish tendency to party or faction. The incidents may be thus briefly stated,—

1. Our private separation.
2. Our public separation.
3. The interval between our public separation, and the inquiry of 1806.
4. The complaint of the Princess in 1813, as to the restricted intercourse between herself and daughter.
5. The retirement of the Princess to the continent.

The first point, (the reasons of our private separation,) it does not become me to explain; her Royal Highness might, (if she had so pleased,) have claimed in the proper court, the restitution of her conjugal rights; such a proceeding would have produced an explanation.

As to the second point, we separated upon terms mutually understood, and to which the Princess added herself a peremptory condition; those terms have by me been inviolably preserved; as a husband I enabled my wife to maintain the dignity of her rank and station as Princess of Wales; I visited her separation with no pecuniary privations, but on the contrary, paid for her, debts exceeding her means of expenditure to the amount of forty-nine thousand pounds; the government of the country at the same time liquidating a further sum of thirty-one thousand pounds.

As to the third point, the preceding remarks in part apply. On the subject of actual inquiry, I may be allowed to say, that the Prince of Wales is born with certain rights previously created, as a line of duty to be by him fulfilled. The

preservation of the chastity of his wife, with a view to the purity of the succession, is one of those duties. When, therefore, in consequence of rumours too loud and too deep to remain unheard, I demanded an inquiry, as part of the duty of my high birth and national rank; I submitted the case to the responsible ministers of the crown; I acquiesced in the sentence passed upon the termination of the inquiry, and bowed to the decision which had been pronounced by the warm and zealous friend of the Princess, who was judge upon the occasion.

As to the fourth point, I endeavoured by every means in my power to prevent our disputes from taking a political turn, embarrassing to the government of the country; and I most particularly aimed at preserving in the mind of the Princess Charlotte, a neutrality on the delicate occasion; the restriction imposed on the intercourse between the Princess and her daughter was connected with the system of her education, which by law, rested with the Sovereign. When on a subsequent period in 1813, the Princess of Wales addressed to me as Regent, a letter alluding to such restriction, and also to the proceedings of 1806, almost grown out of recollection, I submitted such letter to noblemen, differing in political opinion from those who had on the former occasion made a report on the conduct of the Princess; the result of this re-inquiry produced no change, no imputation on the former statements and evidence, and I still continued to consider the whole affair as one of domestic inconvenience, in as much, as the succession to the throne was pronounced *not to be endanger'd*.

As to the fifth point, upon the retirement of her Royal Highness to the continent, I continued to the Princess her residence in a royal palace, leaving it as a domicil open to her return, and I declare on my honour as a Prince, that I never on any previous occasion threw the slightest obstacle in the way of her Royal Highness's comfort, tranquillity, and domestic arrangement. The affairs of Princes can-

not be conducted in the same obscure and unostentatious mode as those of private individuals; to snatch a few moments of private life is, in a Prince, to enjoy real happiness. All the difficulties which have occurred in the case in question have been produced and created, they were not of natural origin, but have been foisted on the original evil by factious persons, seeking to advance their own political purposes. Had not the Princess placed herself avowedly in such hands, many of the mortifications of her situation had been avoided; they would indeed have had no existence. Finally, I declare again, upon my honour, that my conduct aimed to keep the whole unhappy affair within the character of a domestic and purely personal misfortune; and it is only by the attempts made by factious, to give it a political complexion, that the attention of the people has been fixed upon it as a national grievance.

I have now, my subjects and fellow-countrymen, gone through the first great division of my letter; I approach the second, I trust with feelings, as a King, suitable to the occasion.

Hitherto I have appeared only as Prince of Wales, and Regent.

* * * * *

Her Royal Highness quitted England as Princess of Wales early in August in the year 1814, and in the succeeding November (a short interval of three months,) appears to have consulted my tranquillity, by furnishing grounds for a third inquiry into the propriety of her conduct. After three years of rumours, a commission to examine into their truth or falsehood, was a third time rendered necessary for the honour of the Crown of these realms; thus in both cases, as well in the investigation of 1806, as also in that of 1818, it was not until years of rumour had been allowed to rouse suspicions, that any official measures were adopted to enquire into their reality.

Possibly the great error has been, that such rumours were

permitted to remain so long without an inquiry. Had spies really surrounded her Royal Highness, the purposes of a commission of inquiry would have been anticipated and rendered unnecessary.

When the powers of my regency merged in the succession to the throne, one of the first duties devolving upon me as a head of the Church, was to "to settle according to the Act of Uniformity, such parts of the Liturgy as was affected by the decease of my venerable Father and King of blessed memory."

How lightly have too many of my subjects thought of the feelings by which their sovereign must have been influenced upon so solemn an occasion !

How inconsiderately have too many of my subjects viewed this vital act of religion as a mere matter of form, requiring only a dash of the pen !

How narrowly have too many of my subjects confined their sense of this form, within the bounds of custom and precedent !

How blindly have too many of my subjects viewed this act of devotional formulary !

And how completely have too many of my subjects separated the act to be done, from him upon whom fell the most painful duty of its performance !

Behold then, your Sovereign, in the presence of that God to whom all hearts are open, required by the first servant of our holy national Church, to sanction as head of that Church, a formulary, in which the thousands, and tens of thousands, and millions of his subjects were to address their prayers, and praises, and supplications to the King of Kings.

Behold him thus situated, called upon to doubt and to decide between his conscience and his feelings, whether his own wife deserved, without hesitation, to be admitted to the high dignity, *de facto*, of Queen of these United Kingdoms. Behold him, thus situated, and himself obliged to decide, no other authority, according to the laws of the realm, having

power to relieve him from the duty. And why was I thus called upon to doubt? Because my council, according to their oaths, which is to "advise for the King's honour and good of the public, without partiality, through affection, love, meed, doubt, or dread;" and in performance of their duty, which is "*to enquire into all offences against the government,*" had not left me unacquainted with the existence of a *prima facie* case, of gross and long continued adultery, alleged to be committed by the late Princess of Wales, now *de jure* the Queen.

It became therefore evident, it was unavoidable, that whenever the Queen thought proper to return to my kingdom, she must meet this charge, the truth or falsehood of which remained still to be proved. My council strictly confined themselves to their legal duty, *that of inquiring only*: and the features of that inquiry imposed upon them the painful duty of placing the Queen in a state of abeyance.

This solemn decision, I may say, this vitally religious act, presented itself to me in two points of view. Was I, with such knowledge in my possession, to recommend unhesitatingly and specially, the name of the Queen, to the prayers of the church? Or was I to leave the name to be inserted when her Majesty should have wiped off this foul charge of adultery? In the first case, it might possibly have fallen to my painful office again to have expunged the insertion; and in the second case, it might happily have been my duty to have supplied the omission. Which of the two modes afforded the least probability of future embarrassment? As yet, only a *prima facie* suspicion of adultery was exhibited against the Queen; I had a right to presume her innocent, I had a right to expect that future circumstances might justify the insertion of her Majesty's name, but such an insertion being a matter of discretion, the words "*and all the Royal Family,*" did not exclude the Queen. To have inserted the Queen's name specially, and subsequently to have found myself obliged by the law of the land to expunge it; would, with a great degree of reason, have

subjected me to the charge of having first introduced such name, that I might enjoy the malicious triumph of erasing it ; thus adding increased harshness to any future sentence. By using the phrase, “ and all the Royal Family ; ” *any future alteration*, under any circumstances of substantiated guilt or innocence, *would be rendered unnecessary*. To have inserted the name of the Queen, with a knowledge such as I possessed, through my legal council, would, in my opinion, have been contrary to the laws of the kingdom ; for among other charges which *might* have been brought forward against the Queen, was “ her probable conversion to the Roman Catholic faith.” But to *postpone* the insertion of the name of the Queen, and afterwards to have been called upon to supply the omission, would, to her Majesty, have been a gracious act of acquittal, and restoration to regal honour ; and I had a right to hope that such would be the result. Besides, the object and intention of the postponement of this insertion, was most certainly not with a view to any proceedings against the Queen, but in anticipation of that continuance of mutual separation, which the Queen, in her letter of leave, declared to be “ necessary to my future tranquillity.”

I will suppose for one moment, the insertion to have been made. Had it been done under concealment from me, of existing circumstances, *my ministers would have been guilty of misprision of treason, and been liable to impeachment*. But as it was done, with my knowledge ; if ten thousands of ten thousand tongues were to demand of me, to tarnish the crown of your King, I would abandon it to the people rather than commit so great a crime. Whatever may have been the indiscretions of THE MAN, the future historian of England, shall never record them as connected with THE KING.

It should not be overlooked, that the alteration of the Liturgy was also to regulate my own public devotion, as well as that of my subjects ; should I not then by the special insertion of the name of the Queen, under existing circumstances, have most deservedly subjected myself to a charge of

impious and detestable hypocrisy? "You have been praying yourself specially for the Queen; you Royal Hypocrite! whilst you have watched her destruction;" would have been a just and unanswerable accusation against me; an accusation, which, if well founded, would have rendered the word of the King unworthy of belief.

Those only are the real exclusionists, who do not choose to comprehend the Queen, as implied in the words "and all the Royal Family."

Had either the religious or legal considerations of this important point permitted me conscientiously to have inserted the name of the Queen in the Liturgy of the Church; all other minor considerations would have had no bearing upon the question; for that which would have been consistent with religion and law, could not have been *contra bonos mores*. I dwell not therefore on the subject, as connected with the morals of the country, but in its consideration, and in all its vital bearings, I cannot but have contemplated the consequences of a Queen charged with high crimes and misdemeanors, sitting upon that throne so lately occupied by the personification of chastity and matrimonial excellence.

Will the virtuous and noble, the high minded and chaste, the amiable and domestic females of England, adopt the Queen as an example and model worthy of their imitation? Will they pronounce her faultless? Will they compose her court? If I can place the Queen on the throne of my ancestors upon such terms, I am ready to do so. Upon none other, can or ought a Queen to sit upon the throne of pre-eminent England.

I proceed now to the offer of an ample allowance offered to the Queen, provided she continued to remain abroad in the retirement she had voluntarily adopted; and the alternative with which that offer was accompanied. I have pointed out *this transaction*, and the *suspension in the Liturgy*, as acts which *may appear* to have emanated more immediately from my own personal feelings.

I have previously remarked, that from the period of my becoming Regent, the differences between the Princess and myself had assumed a political character, and been treated by many as a party question.

The companions of my youth, and the distinguished characters with whom, in my earlier years, I had intimately associated, had created in the public mind, a widely extended, and readily believed opinion, that when the sceptre of my Father should descend to me, I should, from among those associates, have chosen the members of my administration. During the discussion of the terms of the regency, I was careful to avoid giving any pledge of the line of policy I might find it expedient to adopt. A short previous administration, composed of those political friends by whom it was conjectured my councils would have been directed, had enabled me to form some opinion of their executive talents; and notwithstanding, an overture was made by me to them, to propose an administration. But when I found the conditions required would have reduced me to a mere political automaton, of which they were to possess the key; that not content with forming the administration, they required also, that I should be surrounded in my household by their adherents, and left to no choice in the appointment of my own attendants; when with this, I compared the candour and the unequivocal absence of all personal feeling with which the bill creating the Regency was carried by the then ministry; and above all, the frank, loyal, and respectful regret which was shown to the calamity of my revered Parent; and the so immediate provision made for the resumption by him of the regal dignity, that should it have pleased Providence so to have restored him, my Royal Father would have awokened as if from a dream, and have found himself unreminded of his affliction; when to this I added the important consideration, that the flame of freedom was beginning to glimmer in Spain; that the then administration were prepared to take advantage of every circumstance favourable

to the destruction of the military tyrant of Europe; and when all these various considerations were upheld by the weight of personal character which was contained in the then cabinet; I felt sufficiently justified in not suffering former prepossessions to stand for one moment in the way of newly created duties. I felt that an existing experienced executive, was, at such a time, safer than a theoretical cabinet. I had also a doubt in my own mind, whether, during my Sovereign's life, I ought, as Regent, to adopt the principles of those who had been violently opposed to my Royal Father's measures, or pursue a line of policy unchanged, and such as my king would have continued had he remained the active head of the Empire. This was a feeling of the heart; it was mine.

This, my determination, produced two consequences; 1. A series of unbroken, glorious, and important victories, attended with ~~such~~ results, as the history of the world, within a similar period of time, cannot produce; 2. The conversion of my matrimonial differences into a political attack upon my authority.

From this moment then, the Queen, by becoming the tool of party, gave to her cause and her conduct a new feature, and an importance which required the vigilant eye of the government.

I have been led into this digression, that the distinction I still endeavoured to uphold between my marital and royal station, might be plainly and easily comprehended. I return now to the consideration of the offer made to the Queen, of an allowance upon certain stipulations; viz. that the Queen should *cease to use* the name and style of Queen of England, and remain abroad, where she had voluntarily seceded.

The period when this determination was decided upon, must not be forgotten; it must not only not be forgotten, but it should be allowed its due weight in the decision of so momentous an affair. It appears almost indeed to be overlooked, that I met my first parliament in the month of April,

at the very period and while a set of infuriated, misguided, and unhappy culprits were on their trials for a conspiracy to overturn the constitution and government of these realms, of which the commencement was intended to be, the indiscriminate assassination of my cabinet ministers. The general situation of the country, at that precise moment, appears also to have been thrown into the back ground. I cannot better recall those unhappy inauspicious moments, than by repeating again to my subjects the topics addressed to the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, upon our first meeting.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen,

“ Deeply as I regret that the machinations and designs of the disaffected should have led in some parts of the country, to acts of open violence and insurrection, I cannot but express my satisfaction at the promptitude with which those attempts have been suppressed by the vigilance and activity of the magistrates, and by the zealous co-operation of all those of my subjects whose exertions have been called forth to support the authority of the laws.

“ The wisdom and firmness manifested by the late parliament and the due execution of the laws, have greatly contributed to restore confidence throughout the kingdom; and to discountenance those principles of sedition and irreligion, which had been disseminated with such malignant perseverance, and had poisoned the minds of the unwary and ignorant.

“ I rely upon the continued support of parliament, in my determination to maintain, by all the means entrusted to my hands, the public safety and tranquillity.

“ Deploring, as we all must, the distress which still unhappily prevails among many of the labouring classes of the community, and anxiously looking forward to its removal or mitigation, it is in the mean time our common duty, effectually to protect the loyal, the peaceable, and the industrious, against those practices of turbulence and intimidation, by which the period of relief can only be deferred, and by which the pressure of the distress has been incalculably aggravated.

"I trust that an awakened sense of the dangers which they have incurred, and of the acts which have been employed to seduce them, will bring back by far the greater part of those who have been unhappily led astray, and will revive in them that spirit of loyalty, that due submission to the laws, and that attachment to the constitution, which subsist unabated in the hearts of the great body of the people, and which under the blessing of Divine Providence, have secured to the British Nation, the enjoyment of a larger share of practical freedom, as well as of prosperity and happiness, than have fallen to the lot of any nation in the world."

If to the pending trials alluded to, and this general reference to the state of the kingdom, suffering under severe privations in some of its provinces, are added the numerous cases of treason, libel, and minor political offences under the progressive cognizance of the courts of law ; I think my subjects and countrymen will admit, that to such previously existing evils *no addition was wanting to renew internal agitation which was beginning to subside.* The return of the Queen, under the circumstances in which she must necessarily meet, was of all others, calculated to revive that internal agitation ; and why was it so calculated ? because the Queen had, (as I have previously remarked) given by her conduct a political feeling to the differences between us. Had this not been the case, she could not have had, at least she ought not to have had any motives for her return ; or had she any, she ought to have sacrificed them to the welfare of our country.

From 1796 we had been separated, a period now of twenty-four years ; disturbed by an almost constant suspicion of her conduct : the Queen had been estranged from Court, our Royal Daughter was no more ; and her majesty had but one duty to perform towards me, "the performance of an agreed separation."

A Queen Consort of England has no political rank, she possesses, *in case of the Sovereign*, certain inherent prero-

gatives ; those prerogatives are capable of being enjoyed by her, in her absence ; they required not her presence. The presence of the Queen could neither revive trade languishing in some of its branches, tranquillize the irritation of distress, or conciliate the clamour of faction ; and indeed, many records of English History hand down to us, the impolitic and dangerous counsels, which have ensued from the interference of Queens Consort in the political contests of the times. Although by way of eminent distinction, the word "Queen" is applicable only to the King's wife, yet, it originally signifies a wife, or woman. A Queen of England (unless Queen in her own right,) is a subject of the King, and can claim no political character from the people ; to her, at a coronation, no oath is administered, and no homage or allegiance offered. The coronation of a Queen is distinct, and subsequent to that of the King ; it is not at all necessary to the accession or title to the throne ; and when performed, is a ceremony so performed for the greater honour of the kingly office. It proceeds from the King.*

If therefore I am to define the office or duty of a Queen consort, I might sum it up in a few words, "To give a tone to the *morals* of the country." Does not the late reign furnish an indisputable proof of the truth of this axiom ?

Since then the Queen had deprived herself of the possibility of performing the duties of her station, and her return could produce none of those effects which were so evident during the long reign of my late Royal and revered Parents, could the next object of my solicitude be otherwise, than an attempt, still to treat the long borne separation, as a personal and domestic transaction ?

The Queen was growing old, we are both beyond the hey-day of life, and the levities of conduct attributed to her, might now be supposed to have worn or to have been wearing away. Our country required political repose ; and above all, an internal quietude. Had no charge of adul-

* Taylor's Glory of Regality.

terry at all existed, there were sufficient grounds on both sides, for wishing, and for rendering desirable, a continuance of the existing separation.

In private life, what would the friends of a married couple, so long divided as the Queen and myself have been, think of the conduct of a wife, who would wish to return to her husband, under circumstances such as have occurred between us? Would any female in England so *meanly* conduct herself? Would any husband in England so take back a wife? If he would not, why should your King? If the female would not so return, why should the Queen? You will tell me, "To claim her rights." I reply, that the Queen possesses no political rights; but certain prescribed prerogatives; those prerogatives are legally defined, their value as personal advantages can be ascertained; they can be enjoyed by the Queen as well absent as present. I have offered her an equivalent. You will tell me, "That *she chooses* to return to our country, and that I have no right to restrain her." The Queen has chosen to return, and by the laws of the realm must she now abide; the Queen is my subject.

If then I am asked, "why did I offer the Queen fifty thousand pounds a year to remain abroad, and cease to use openly the style and title of Queen of England," I answer, "To purchase the tranquillity of my country; to prevent a recurrence of those acts which had seduced so many of my subjects into danger, and to bring them back to that spirit of loyalty, that due submission to the laws, and that attachment to the constitution, which I hope still subsists in the hearts of the great body of my people;" all which I knew would be endangered by the *selfish return of a Queen*, who never can and never will sit upon the throne of England whilst George the Fourth wears the crown of his forefathers; until the female nobility, shall in a body, justify him in such act, with their sanction and presence, every other rank of the virtuous and chaste would coincide.

Before I conclude this subject of an offered pension, I cannot but regret extremely, that the chance of cool and dispassionate deliberation which the Queen might have been disposed to have given to my offer and its alternative, was greatly diminished by the neglect of her Attorney-General, in the delivery of an ultimatum communicated to him in the month of April. Such neglect rendered Lord Hutchinson's communication so much the more sudden, stern, and unexpected. Of the zeal of that gentleman (her Majesty's Attorney General) no one can entertain a higher opinion than myself; for his own sake, I may be allowed to say, that nothing disgraced his advocacy, but the threat of personal danger held out to the assembled peers of the realm. Otherwise, who would not wish to have a cause so defended? Had also her Majesty's Solicitor General omitted one or two similes in his declamation, he had also retired from his duty with more dignity. Upon the grounds of the case I am silent; but looking to the conduct of the Lord Chancellor, the differences which existed between the members of the cabinet; the splendid and argumentative talents of the opposition, all tending and working together to elicit truth and produce an impartial judgment; I may fearlessly ask, if under such principles, and in such an assembly, justice is not to be found; I ask fearlessly, where does she dwell upon earth? I view finally the pause which this unhappy affair has taken, as a striking proof of that inflexible adherence to parliamentary avowals, which combines the good man with the great minister; and as the performance of the pledge, that "the Queen should have an equivalent for any and every obstacle which the anomaly of her case presented in the obstruction of her trial."

I am now drawing towards the close of this my letter, in the which my faithful subjects and excellent fellow-countrymen will (I trust) agree with me, not only that the difference existing between her Majesty and myself arose out

of a domestic cause, and was solely of a domestic nature ; but that all the popular feeling which has been excited, has arisen from the political misdirection imposed upon the transaction, a transaction important to the nation only as it can be connected with their welfare. How that welfare can be promoted by forcing upon a loathing husband an equally loathing wife, appears to me, a problem in government, not easily to be maintained in argument, or proved by historical reference. If I am unhappily united to a bad wife, or the Queen be under the caprice of a bad husband ; provided these unpleasantnesses be confined within the limits of our personal conduct, and are not mixed up with affairs of state, I see then no impediment to the due constitutional performance of my duties as King : but on the contrary, if the people disturb my kingly office, and clog its executive or dignity with an unseasonable family blister, the chance is that the system of government may become ill-executed, greatly obstructed, or completely embarrassed. If such is the aim of the partizans of the Queen, I have then only to declare this my determination, " That if the claims of the Queen can make no impression on me upon their own merits, any political association which she may form to give weight to, or to disguise such claims, will only call forth from me as your King, a firmer defence of my own rights, which are the rights of the constitution under which I, the nobles, and the people, all alike find reciprocal protection."

My people will now (I trust) begin to allow themselves more clearly to define, and more accurately to preserve the distinction between my conduct as Prince of Wales, with reference to the purity of the succession to the throne of my forefathers, and my behaviour as a separated husband. In the one case, the performance of painful public duties has devolved upon me ; but I feel satisfied that their unavoidable performance has not been accompanied by uncourteous or vexatious personal conduct. To the high individual as a separate wife, every attention has been invariably paid, and

upon every occasion, money has been at her command for the purposes of comfort, pleasure, or fickleness. Surely, in return for such complete observance of the terms of mutual separation, the Prince of Wales had a right to expect the performance of the only duty remaining to be performed by, and the only one required of the Princess ; namely, "*An unquestionable and unequivocal propriety of conduct.*"

I could not probably fix upon a more convenient or appropriate mode of pourtraying the consequences of the present public effervescence than by anticipating the sentiments which some historian of my reign may hand down to future ages. I will do this in two ways ; *First*, "upon the supposition, that the Queen (even after what has already occurred,) will be reinstated in all the prerogatives of her rank ;" *and secondly*, "That the Queen will remain estranged from the crown."

IN THE FIRST CASE, the historian may be supposed thus to express himself : "George the Fourth, after a regency of nearly nine years, succeeded to the throne of his venerable and most excellent Father, whose eventful reign had extended beyond the period of any other British Monarch. The brilliant events of the Regency of George the Fourth, unparalleled in history, are already recorded ; his reign commenced amidst domestic losses, (his Brother, the Duke of Kent, having died very suddenly at Sidmouth, in Devonshire, six days only before their Royal Parent) public agitation, and great national distress, attended with all those factious symptoms, which the English History appears almost invariably to record, as a symptom of peace. A month had not elapsed, before a most atrocious conspiracy, aiming no less than at the indiscriminate assassination of all his Majesty's Ministers during a cabinet dinner, was detected. On the twenty-first of April His Majesty met his parliament, and in his Royal Speech upon the occasion, alluded to the disquietude and distress of the kingdom, hinted at their cause, and expressed a hope, that in the returning loyalty

and legal obedience of the people, a remedy for those evils would be found. The atrociousness of the conspiracy alluded to, had opened the eyes of the supine, and alarmed the fears of the timid ; and a more imposing public attitude being consequently produced, tranquillity was gradually increasing into confidence. At this moment, it pleased the Queen, (who had now been separated from her Royal Husband *twenty-four years*, and had estranged herself from England for six years), to return from the continent under the auspices of *one* Wood, an Alderman of the City of London. The Queen returned, in the teeth of a proposition from the administration, that she should still continue to remain abroad, and not seek to disturb a connexion so long broken off ; and in defiance of a threat, that judicial proceedings would follow her landing. The intrepidity of her conduct was well calculated to please the English Nation, and this daring and inconsiderate step, (a step which her own legal adviser pronounced to be unhappily taken, both as regarded herself, the Parliament, the government, and the country) was rendered immediately popular by the epithet of *brave*. Would any but an innocent woman (said the populace) have thus conducted herself ?

Whilst the Queen was pursuing her journey from Dover to the metropolis, a royal message was delivering to parliament ; and papers in sealed bags brought down to both houses. The Queen arrived on the very day on which his Majesty went down to the House of Lords, to give his assent to the first bill passed since his accession. After various ineffectual delays, in the hope of effecting an arrangement, by which the Queen might have again left the kingdom ; the House of Lords proceeded to appoint a secret committee, to examine the documents sent down to them (the House of Commons suspending their proceedings), and shortly made a report on the same, charging the Queen with an adulterous intercourse with a man of the name of Bergami, or Pergami, on whom she had conferred, or for whom she had

procured certain titles and orders of distinction. A bill of Pains and Penalties was thereupon brought in by the Earl of Liverpool, after long and elaborate arguments upon the propriety and applicability of the proceeding, had taken place in the House of Peers. The case presented an anomaly, for no statute existed, applicable to a charge of adultery committed by a Queen of England, *abroad and with a foreigner*. This nice distinction took the offence from within the pale of high treason; for inasmuch as the principal was not amenable to the laws of the country, consequently the *particeps criminis* could not be judicially recognized by the statutes of treason. Every preliminary of this great measure, was discussed to the very letter, with a degree of eloquence and profound learning which reflected unfading lustre upon the House of Peers, and on the individual noblemen, who led both sides of the debates. The question appeared new, and every aspect of its bearing was most minutely and rigidly examined; great debate more particularly took place on the question of allowing to the illustrious accused, a list of witnesses, as in cases of high treason; when it was at length decided to open the case, produce the evidence, and allow the Queen an interval, (such as her counsel should deem requisite) to prepare her defence. Thus her Majesty was not only supplied eventually with a list of witnesses; but had the further guide of their sworn testimony. The Attorney General, (Sir R. Gifford,) opened the case according to his instructions, and by command of the house, with little preliminary remark, and certainly without inflation. Her Majesty's cause was less upheld by the evidence of the witnesses against her, (of whom the popular feeling pronounced a pre-judgment of perjury,) than by a deficiency of refutation on her own part. The Queen was most ably, most zealously, and most eloquently defended by Messrs. Brougham, Denman, Lushington and others; and the house bore the license of their harangues with a noble equanimity of patience. After hearing both the charge and the defence, which

occupied forty-five days, the house adjourned two days, before it met to debate the principle of the bill; which discussion occupied four days. The second reading was carried by a majority of twenty-eight, the numbers being *for it* 123, *against it* 95. During the progress of the measure, several protests were entered on the Journals of the House, in one of which the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister were directly opposed to each other; a brother of the King absented himself wholly from the investigation; a cousin of the King voted against the measure in all its stages; both the Ministry and the Opposition were divided amongst themselves, and intermingled their votes; the preamble of the bill underwent but little alteration in the committee; and in the clause for pronouncing a divorce as part of the pains and penalties, all the Cabinet Ministers, (nine) voted against it. The divorce clause was however carried by a majority of 67, there being contents 129, non-contents 62. Most of the peers who had this moment contended against the principle of the bill in all its stages, argued (with much plausible appearance of reason) that since the Queen was virtually pronounced guilty of an adulterous intercourse, by the votes of the second reading; *divorce became the natural consequence, as part of the sentence of the bill*, they therefore voted for it. The third reading of the bill, was carried on the 10th of November by the small majority of nine; the numbers being for it 108, against it 99.

Lord Liverpool, (who had brought in the bill, as an individual peer, and not as a member of the administration), immediately moved, that "the bill be read that day six months," alleging the smallness of the majority, as the motive*.

* Bill [as read a third time,] entitled An act to deprive her Majesty, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, of the title, prerogatives, rights, privileges, and exemptions of Queen Consort of this realm; and to dissolve the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth.

Whereas in the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, her Majesty Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, then Princess of Wales, and now Queen Consort of

The friends of the Queen received this unexpected reprieve from the bill, after proof of the facts, and admission of their reality, as a total and complete acquittal of her Majesty from all charge of criminality; and proclaimed their

this realm, being at Milan, in Italy, engaged in her service, in a menial situation, one Bartolomeo Pergami, a foreigner of low station, who had before served in a similar capacity. And whereas after the said Bartolomeo Pergami had so entered the service of her Royal Highness the said Princess of Wales, a most unbecoming and degrading intimacy commenced between her said Royal Highness and the said Bartolomeo Pergami, and her said Royal Highness not only exalted the said Bartolomeo Pergami to a high situation in her Royal Highness's household, and received into her service many of his near relations, some of them in inferior and others in high and confidential situations about her Royal Highness's person, but bestowed upon him other great and extraordinary marks of favour and distinction, and conferred upon him a pretended order of knighthood, which her Royal Highness had taken upon herself to institute, without any just or lawful authority: And whereas also her said Royal Highness, whilst the said Bartolomeo Pergami was in her said service, further unmindful of her exalted rank and station, and of her duty to your Majesty, and wholly regardless of her own honour and character, conducted herself towards the said Bartolomeo Pergami, both in public and private, in various places and countries which her Royal Highness visited, with indecent and offensive familiarity and freedom, and carried on a licentious, disgraceful, and adulterous intercourse with the said Bartolomeo Pergami, which continued for a long period of time, during her Royal Highness's residence abroad; by which conduct of her said Royal Highness, great scandal and dishonour have been brought upon your Majesty's family and this kingdom. Therefore, to manifest our deep sense of such scandalous, disgraceful, and vicious conduct on the part of her Majesty, by which she has violated the duty which she owed to your Majesty, and has rendered herself unworthy of the exalted rank and station of Queen Consort of this realm; and to evince our just regard for the dignity of the crown, and the honour of this nation; we, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons in parliament assembled, do humbly intreat your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that her said Majesty, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, from and after the passing of this act, shall be, and is hereby deprived of the title of Queen, and of all the prerogatives, rights, privileges, and exemptions, appertaining to her as Queen Consort of this realm; and that her said Majesty shall, from and after the passing of this act, for ever be disabled and rendered incapable of using, exercising, and enjoying the same, or any of them; and, moreover, that the marriage between his Majesty and the said Caroline Amelia Elizabeth be, and the same is hereby, from henceforth for ever, wholly dissolved, annulled, and made void, to all intents, instructions, and purposes whatsoever.

sense of her innocence by rejoicings and illuminations; to which the Lord Mayor of London, two days old in office, gave his young countenance. Less riot and disturbance however took place, than might have been expected; but this was principally owing to the moderation of their antagonists; who (whatever might be their opinion of the guilt or innocence of the Queen; and did not consider a happy escape in the light of an honourable acquittal) were not disposed to thwart the effect of a delusion which appeared in many of its features to pourtray great generosity and sympathy in supposed sufferings. The Queen returned thanks in the church of the hamlet of the parish in which she resided, and a second time on the 29th of November, at Saint Paul's, escorted by the voluntary association of her friends, and was received with due civic honour at Temple Bar by the young Lord Mayor of London. Immense as was the crowd assembled, judicious regulations, prompted by the high responsibility which the young chief magistrate took upon himself on the occasion, prevented all confusion or accident. The King had previously adjourned both Houses of Parliament, without a Speech either from the Throne, or by his Commissioners. The Speaker of the House of Commons was bidden as he proceeded to follow the Usher of the Black Rod to the House of Peers; nor did he (there being no Royal Speech, but merely a command to adjourn) again enter the house. This mode of separation appeared to the nation very ungracious, and the disturbed reign of Charles the First was ransacked for precedents. But the King could hardly have avoided reference to the proceedings of the Lords, and the more especially as the Commons had been adjourned, subject to a call of the House, and to meet only for business, in the event of the bill of Pains and Penalties coming down to them. On the whole, then, it appeared better to leave the ungracious mode of adjournment for explanation till the next sessions, when men's minds might have acquired greater power of discrimination, a quality very seldom in request on popular occasions.

Thus far have I brought down (and I trust fairly and dispassionately) the outline of this transaction, as it occurred ; and with this outline (which will serve as far as it goes, for both speculations, that of preceding “ the restoration of the Queen to all her prerogatives at her court,” and that of still “ restraining her from their enjoyment and exercise.”) I go on, in my assumed character of an historian, to observe on the consequences of such opposite results.

First then, the historian may hereafter pourtray the consequences of the Queen's restoration to her prerogatives and court, in the following manner :

“ Whether the ministers mistook the popular clamour for the real feeling of the nation, or were unwilling to resign their seals of office ; or whether they were intimidated by the examples of Spain, Portugal, Naples, and Sicily, all at this time changing their form of Government, with more or less of violence ; they advised the King *to feel no impediment* to the public reception of the Queen ; who, having now the vantage ground, insisted upon the insertion of her name in the Liturgy, and the expunging from the Journals of the House of Lords, of all the proceedings connected with her case, as preliminaries to such reception. The first was readily accomplished ; to procure the second, the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor (two of the most able ministers and upright men of the day) having retired in disgust, every parliamentary finesse was resorted to ; and at length, with great difficulty, and amid violent debates and mutual recriminations, the point was carried by a majority of one ; there being for the expunging 91 ; against it 90. Bonfires and illuminations, strong beer and roasted beasts were for a whole week the order of each successive day ; and in so great a joy, few troubled themselves to calculate upon futurity.

“ But short was the delirium, and dreadful the consequences.

“ The King was laughed at and pitied as a dupe, the Queen was openly scorned, faction was triumphant, no com-

petent administration could be formed, and monarchy was on the wane. Those who had opposed the Queen, not from vindictive motives, but to justify the honour of the crown, felt no longer an attachment to a bauble undignified with the jewel of female chastity. The court was seldom held; when held, neglected; official levees supplied its place. The higher and respectable ranks of life withdrew within their own pure and virtuous associations; and that intermixture of society which is the true essence of a free government and a virtuous court, no longer existed. Rich, vulgar plebeianism took the lead in public. At foreign courts, the younger branches of the nobility experienced great difficulty of reception, not having chosen to be presented at their own; but when received at such courts, it was considered as a matter of especial favour conceded to their peculiar situation. Thus was the national character subjected to sarcastic insult; and thus was the lustre of the Crown of England obscured; for whatever might have been the personal faults of its sovereigns, as individuals no more except from human frailty than the humblest of their subjects, but rather more exposed to their commission; yet the Crown of England had been entitled, for the last century at least, to the homage due to unsullied and unquestionable honour. Such were some of the effects of the Queen's restoration.

" The evil, however, stopped not here; scarcely had sufficient time elapsed to justify inconsistency, than the truth of the original charges against the Queen was loudly revived by that very press which had forced her innocence down the throats of the nation. The levellers and jacobins, who lorded over public opinion, professed to defend their change, by the discovery of some new evidence which (said they) had we known before, would have produced a different opinion. Thus, the very men who had so conspicuously advocated the cause of the Queen: who had poured into her ears, addresses of congratulatory exultation; who had headed her processions, and maddened the populace in her behalf; these

very men, who had artfully drawn her to the very precipice of rebellion against her husband and King ; these men, from whom she could not but have expected eternal friendship and never-ending adulation, finding her without influence or patronage, became within six months, her scornful foes. These very men, who had provoked the measure of expunging the whole transaction from the Records of Parliament, and who would fain have burnt in one huge pile, every paper and every Journal which contained the adulterous evidence, themselves were the first to direct the same press which had borne down all opposition against her, to insult, remind, and mortify her. The reign of terror had commenced. Such were the effects of this unaccountable delusion ! Such were the consequences of excusing and exalting vice on the frail plea of political expediency ! ! ”

* * * * *

I proceed now (still in the character of a prophetic historian) to mark the consequences which might follow the Queen’s continued restriction from the public exercise of her prerogatives.

“ On Friday, the 10th of November, this bill of Pains and Penalties passed the third reading, when it was *suspended*, under the form of being read that day six months, and the Lords adjourned to the 23d, the day on which the Commons were to meet, to pursue (if necessary) this important affair. On the 23d both houses met, and were instantly prorogued by Commission, without any Royal Speech. This hasty procurement of separation gave great offence to the Queen’s party ; the House of Commons being summoned at the very moment when the Solicitor-General of the Queen was about to communicate to the House, *a message* from her Majesty.

“ It was evident that the King could have made no Speech to the Houses of Parliament, omitting all reference to the late momentous transaction. Had his Majesty said, that he regretted the issue of it, he would have committed himself personally, besides being guilty of the most unconstitutional

error; that of presuming to know a parliamentary proceeding in transitu, for as yet the bill was not absolutely abandoned. Had his Majesty, on the other hand, made a Royal Communication, omitting, as he must necessarily have done, all reference to the bill in question; it might have been inferred, that future proceedings, in any shape, were abandoned; besides, the interval of adjournment was but for *two* months, and not *seven or eight*, as usually happens, the bill having driven the attendance of both houses to a most unusual lateness. It was deemed therefore most prudent, to encounter the accusation of an ungracious prorogation, for so short a period as two months, rather than be hurried into any hasty avowal. But had there been no such prudent ground for the proceeding, it was sufficiently justified by the subsequent conduct of the Queen; who assumed to herself an authoritative act of government, having prepared her official adviser with *a message* to be delivered to the Commons House of Parliament; a step which might well alarm the servants of the Crown, and indeed the whole nation; for it aimed, in the shape of a message, at a share of the Monarch's power, which the Queen Consort does not possess, *being only a subject.** It is a radical error, for a Queen Consort to call the King's people, *her people*, or for the King's subjects to call themselves the subjects of the King's wife; it is a fault of misdirected loyalty. We may call ourselves, by way of courtesy, the Queen's most dutiful and affectionate *servants*; but legally and constitutionally we can only be the dutiful and affectionate *subjects* of 'the King.'

" During the interval between the prorogation and the meeting of both Houses, the Queen proceeded to Saint Paul's, continued to receive Addresses of Congratulation,

* "The Queen hath also many exemptions and minute prerogatives. For instance, she pays no toll, nor is she liable to any amercement in any Court. But in general, unless where the law has expressly declared her exempted, *she is upon the same footing with other subjects*; and not his equal; in like manner as in the imperial law: '*Augusta, legibus soluta non est.*'" *Blackstone*, cap. 4, page 290.

and renewed unsuccessfully her application for a Royal Residence. But the people had now time to reflect, to compare, to decide. John Bull is never long misled, and now discovered in the case, premature judgments, audacious falsehoods, attempts at intimidation, and unproved assertions; above all, a complete absence of all those promises of refutation, which had been so lavishly and so loudly proclaimed; and the non-performance of which was the more extraordinary, inasmuch, as the persons who might, if they could, have given such testimony, were already in England, and at the Queen's command.

“Upon the meeting of Parliament, the Commons desired a conference with the Upper House, and having thereat obtained leave to search the Journals of the Peers, they became constitutionally acquainted with the late proceedings. They found therein a sentence of guilt pronounced, which, to say the least of it, was tantamount to the effect of a true bill by a Grand Jury.

“With this impression upon their minds, the Commons soon felt, that the question was now completely in their own hands. The passing of the Civil List bill was exactly the period, when their influence would become apparent: but they previously determined once more to address the Queen, by the same deputation, which had gone up on a former occasion. This address commenced by the firm and dignified assurance of the unshaken attachment of the Commons to the throne, the constitution, and the altar, and their determination to preserve them from every attempt of factious anarchy. It proceeded to express great regret for the past, and a hope that by conciliatory measures, all further personal legislation would become unnecessary. It assured the Queen that she might rely upon the continued care and attention of the Commons; should her Majesty, by sacrificing some part of her high claims, be the means of restoring tranquillity to the public mind. It intimated that some points on which the Queen had heretofore insisted, might be the

subject of future and favourable consideration; but that time was necessary to produce a change, which should justify their concession; and it finally dwelt upon the total impossibility, that even should the Queen gain the object of her wishes, it would, under existing circumstances, be attended to her, with happiness or peace of mind."

"In answer to this address, the Queen made but few remarks; but principally dwelt on the utter impossibility of quitting a nation, who had treated her with such unbounded generosity, and espoused her cause with such enthusiastic ardour; and finally proposed, that three friends, appointed by herself, should confer with the deputation of the Commons, and agree upon a basis for a complete adjustment." To this it was objected, that the deputation had no such power of treating; but the difficulty was eventually got over, by their consenting to meet the friends of the Queen as individuals, and subsequently use their exertions to induce the House to adopt such a course of conduct, as might result from the conference; after two meetings it was eventually agreed, *that the Queen should return to Saint Omer's and find herself placed in the same situation, as she would have been, had her legal advisers delivered to her Lord Liverpool's communication of April, previously to that made by Lord Hutchinson.*"

"This departure was accomplished in so unexpected and in so judicious a manner, as far as the coast, that until the Queen was saluted by the guns at Dover, on her embarkation in a Royal Yacht, it was but just rumoured. The Queen was accompanied by two of her legal advisers, who were met by two others, on the part of the Crown. The departure of the Queen being made known to the Parliament, a most gracious vote of thanks was passed in both Houses; the Commons renewed their assurances, that they would pay all due attention to her Majesty's interest. The Civil List bill was expeditiously passed, and a Royal Message brought down to both Houses by Ministers, in which the King thank-

ed the Commons for the generous provision made for the Queen's futur comfort. Her Majesty's Attorney-General also, on his return from Saint Omer's, expressed the Queen's thanks, accompanied by her regret, on leaving England ; but attributing the step she had taken to a thorough conviction that she could never hope to promote the happiness of the King ; and therefore her next wish was to contribute to the tranquill ty of the Kingdom. He also adverted to the impaired health of the Queen ; and the possibility, that she might not again return to the Country of her adoption." "Thus ended an affair, which could not possibly have happened at a more critical moment, for whilst it was proceeding, military revolutions were following one another, through the South of Europe ; and that the mania did not extend to England, can be attributed solely to the sound principles of the vast majority of the Kingdom ; principles which were daily and hourly assailed by a venal press ; and by a system of the most pernicious, irritating, and base political libels, and personal caricatures. But on this occasion the constitution floated above the passions of the people, safe and un- hurt as her navy rides on the turbulent billow, which dashes against Albion's rocky sides."

"Amidst these internal commotions, it pleased Providence to bless the kingdom with a most abundant harvest ; so that the winter passed over with much less proportionate privations to the humbler classes of the community. Indeed it may be rather said, that such heavenly bounty, administered by charitable hands and feeling hearts, rendered distress unknown. The following spring found the whole nation, except certain disappointed speculating politicians, in good humour ; and the moment was most judiciously seized to administer to the whole United Kingdom, the oath of allegiance. The ceremony was accompanied by every mark of joy and magnificence ; it was indee : a national banquet. **ON THE TUESDAY**, the magistracy took the oaths in the county towns. **ON THE THURSDAY**, the population took

them in every city, town, and village, in the following manner: Lists had been previously signed, and to each list was prefixed a power by deputation to some person therein named, to take the oath publicly for as many persons as were contained in such lists; and by its form, all persons therein subscribed, were held to be bound by the oath of allegiance, recited also in such instrument. **ON THE SATURDAY**, the Army took the oaths, by regiments, squadrons, and detachments, at their individual quarters; and the Navy by fifties, after the form of the general population. "This splendid and national rejoicing seemed to annihilate every spark of disaffection."

In the autumn, the coronation of his Majesty took place, and the first Act of Grace performed immediately after, was, "*to expunge from the Journals of the Lords, all the accusatory proceedings connected with the Queen of England.*"

"This last step was considered an act of oblivion, and a compliment to the crown." The Queen remained abroad during her life, in conformity with her word of honour."

* * * * *

And now, my faithful subjects, and well-beloved fellow-countrymen, your King takes his leave, recommending the alternative to your attention, and praying to the God and Father of us all, that he will so direct your steps, as to lead both to your temporal and your eternal happiness; praying also that the crown of his forefathers may not be dishonoured on his head, but that mutual love and confidence may render happy both King and People.

My excellent subjects, may God Almighty bless you—
Farewell.

GEORGE.

APOLOGY.

Should the readers of the preceding Letter, have entertained doubts of its authenticity, the Author and Publisher beg leave to satisfy those doubts, by stating, "That it is one of those literary fictions, which can only be justified by a good cause." Indeed they feel so high a degree of veneration for the sacred name of "The King," which (speaking constitutionally), "Never dies;" and so anxious a desire, that nothing directly or indirectly should appear to trifle with its use; that previous to their determination to publish, they submitted the following Question to the opinion of a most eminent Counsel; which question at once proclaimed the author's motive, and the answer subjoined, contains (we trust) our justification.



THE QUESTION.

Suppose A. writes a letter entitled "A Letter from the King," and having written and published such letter, states in a Postscript annexed, that such title was adopted to excite curiosity, and extend its political utility; and that such Letter was neither directly or indirectly written by the King; will such acknowledgment take the assumption of the King's name, out of any and every statute of *premunire*?



OPINION.

I am clearly of opinion, that such acknowledgment as is proposed, will take the Letter out of the Statutes of *premunire*. The term and the offence *premunire*, are now merely sounds; but I decidedly think, that the Letter proposed, written in the tone and spirit which is suggested, will not render the writer responsible to *any penalty whatever*.

Temple, December 4th, 1820.

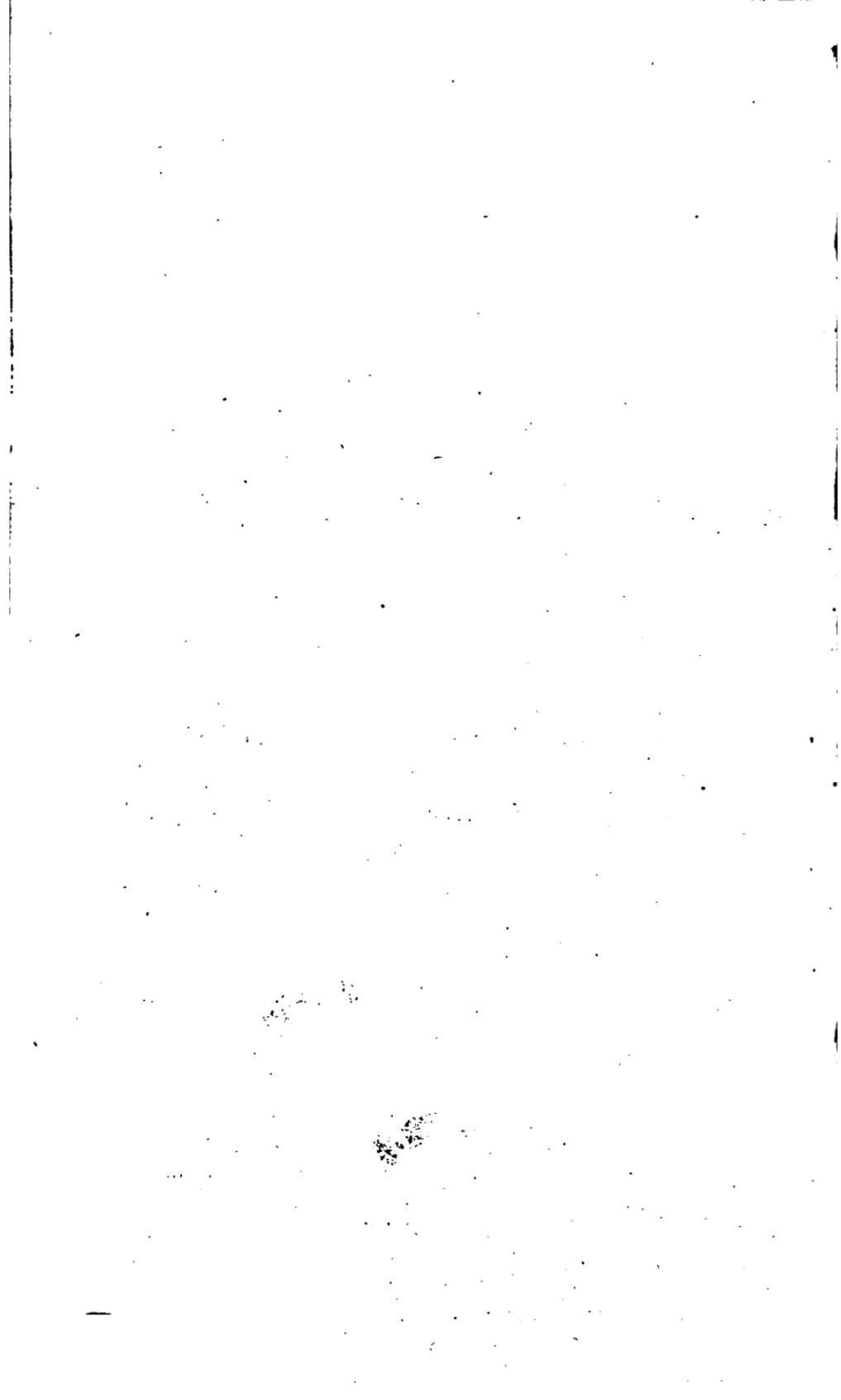
Thus far as to the legality of the act; but should our most gracious Sovereign, chance to see a Publication thus imputed to him; we beg leave most respectfully to deprecate any sentiment of personal dissatisfaction, which he may feel at our bold assumption; assuring The King, that he does not possess among his people, more disinterestedly loyal subjects, than the Author and Publisher of this Letter.

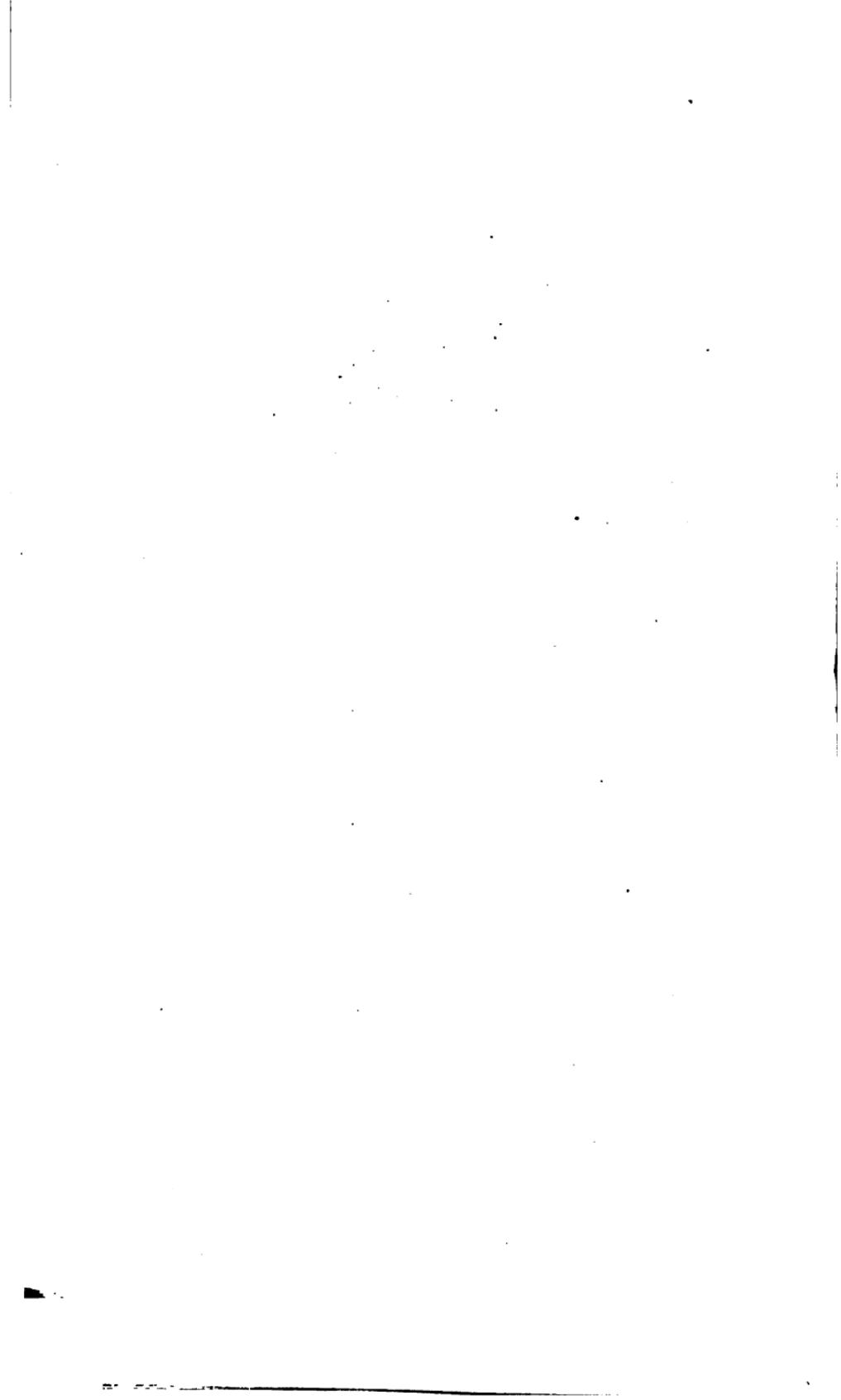
POSTSCRIPT TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

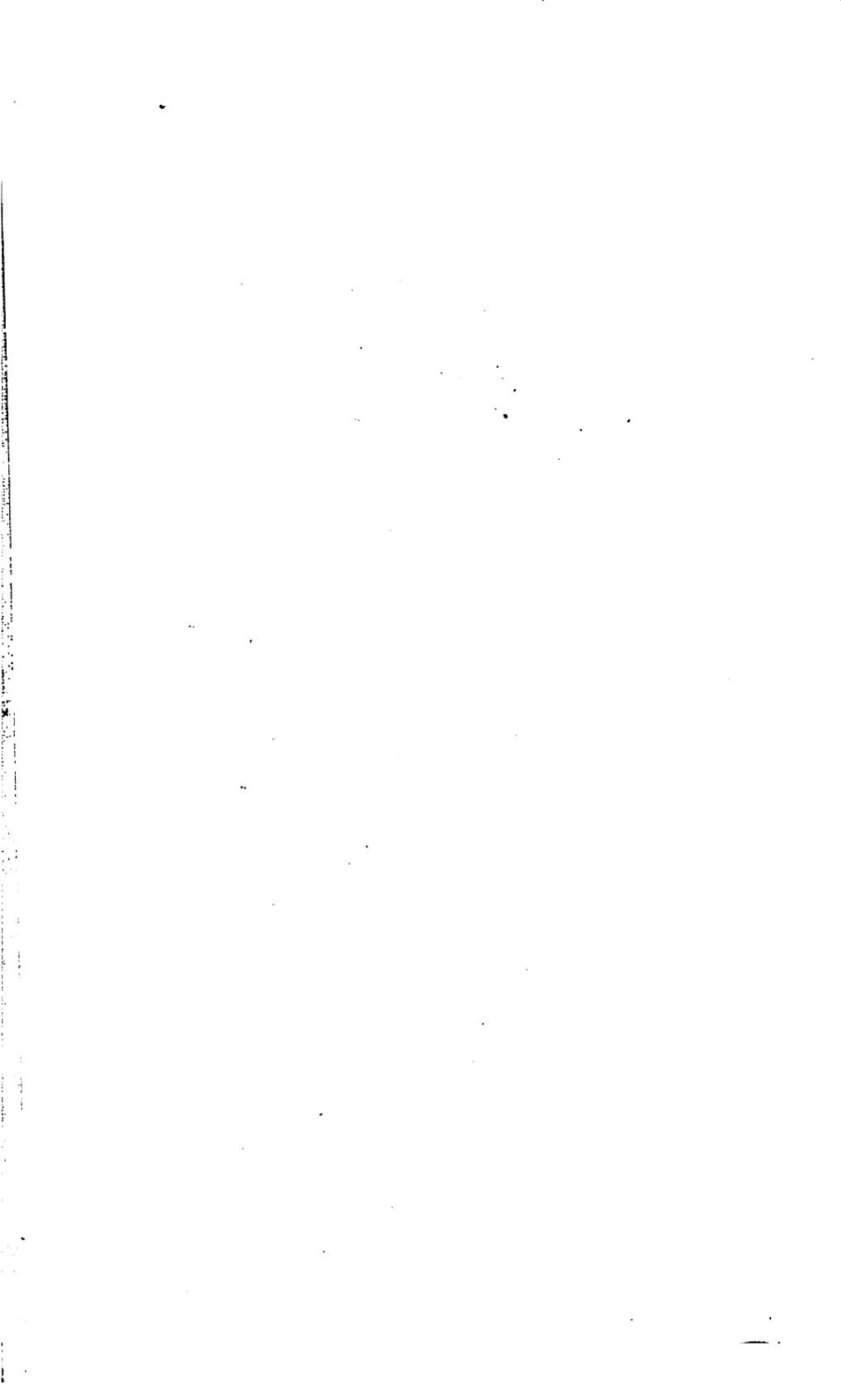
The Amanuensis of this Letter has heard many observations made on this bold attempt of imputing to his Sovereign the sentiments contained therein. He has taken some pains to discover the feelings of the parties raising objections to it; as well as of those who consider it a *timely* boldness. He has the satisfaction of finding, that those are most violent against it, who are unable to answer its argument; and those talk insidiously of this abuse of the King's name, who are great admirers and encouragers of caricatures on his person. In some cases, there is also (even among those who think with himself) a scrupulous feeling as to the mode in which his thoughts are conveyed. Such feeling is conscientious and honourable, but on this occasion, *over nice*. The mode adopted was the only one, capable of producing a dispassionate review of the King's case; it has succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectation, as four editions within a fortnight testify.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

From the moment of deciding upon the bold step of publishing this Letter, it was also determined never to notice any reply, attack, or abuse of it. We are most happy to know, that it has convinced many of the most violent advocates of the Royal Tenant of Brandenburg House, of their injustice towards their noble-minded Sovereign.







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